

*Quality Assurance Toolkit  
for Teacher Education Institutions (QATTEI)*

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**GUIDELINES**



National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)  
Bangalore, India



The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)  
Vancouver, Canada

## **Quality Assurance Toolkit for Teacher Education Institutions (QATTEI): Guidelines**

### **Prepared by:**

**Prof. T. K. S. Lakshmi**

**Dr. (Mrs.) K. Rama**

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Comments on the publication are welcome. Enquiries on the QATTEI and comments may be sent to Dr.(Mrs.) K. Rama at Email: ramakondapalli@hotmail.com or to Prof. Mohan Menon at Email: mmenon@col.org

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**National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)**

Jnanabharathi Road, Nagarabhavi, Bangalore – 560 072,

Karnataka, INDIA

Phone: +91-80-23210261/62/63/64/65

Fax: +91-80-23210270

Email: [naac@blr.vsnl.net.in](mailto:naac@blr.vsnl.net.in) Web: <http://www.naacindia.org>

### ***In Collaboration with***

**Commonwealth of Learning (COL)**

Suite 1200, 1055 West Hastings Street,

Vancouver BC V6E 2E9 CANADA

Phone: +1-604-775-8200

Fax: +1-604-775-8210

Email: [info@col.org](mailto:info@col.org) Web: <http://www.col.org>

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## **FOREWORD**

Quality Assurance in the education sector is one of the major initiatives of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in its Three-Year Plan for 2006-09. To achieve the outcome of enhanced quality at all levels of education, COL has been focusing its attention on quality assurance in higher education and teacher education. We are proud of our association with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) of India in recent years, which has built capacity in quality assurance among personnel at all levels of the system. The partnership has also led to development of a quality assurance framework and resource materials for assessing and assuring the quality of higher education and teacher education institutions.

The Commonwealth of Learning started working in the area of quality assurance for teacher education with NAAC and other quality assurance agencies in the Commonwealth in early 2004. It conducted two Roundtables on quality assurance in Teacher Education as well as a few workshops in order to produce Resource Materials for use by accrediting agencies and teacher education institutions. The materials developed in this process are intended for use all over the Commonwealth by member Governments and institutions. They provide adequate guidelines for formulating quality assurance policies as well as for adopting systems and procedures within teacher education institutions for enhancing the quality of the processes involved in teacher development. The materials are generic and hence of equal benefit to both campus-based and ODL-based teacher education programmes and institutions. They are also expected to be applicable across different systems and modes in both pre-service and in-service teacher education.

The Toolkit now being published contains, first, a package of Quality Indicators listed within a set of quality aspects and categories and, second, a collection of case studies drawn out of best practices from across the Commonwealth linked to one or more of the indicators. The Toolkit can be of use for both internal and external assessment. A teacher education institution could use the toolkit for formative evaluation involving periodical quality assessment followed by taking appropriate action based on the assessment results. It will also be helpful for the Ministries of Education or quality assurance agencies to use the toolkit for the external assessment of institutions in order to proffer appropriate advice.

I am confident that this Toolkit will be of great value to policy makers, administrators and teacher educators within and outside the Commonwealth in bringing a quality culture in their operations. Many Commonwealth countries have already discussed or tried out this Toolkit and have shown interest in using it for different purposes with the appropriate changes that required for each context. The Toolkit could also be used with other suitable materials in conducting advocacy and awareness building workshops and programmes for personnel involved in policy making and implementation of teacher education in the Commonwealth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Daniel', written over a vertical line that serves as a signature separator.

**(Sir John Daniel)**

President & CEO

Commonwealth of Learning

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Bringing out this Toolkit has been possible because of the contributions of varied kinds by several people. We are grateful to the experts who extended their expertise and to the authors who were kind enough to report the “Best Practices” of their respective institutions. We also acknowledge the academic and administrative support provided by various staff members of NAAC and COL, specially - Dr. Sujata Shanbagh, Assistant Advisor, NAAC for helping us in proof reading, Mr. B. L. Mohan and Mr. Sheshachala Murthy, Assistants, NAAC, for assisting in typing and information retrieval, Mr. Wahidul Hasan, Communication Cum Publication Officer, NAAC for helping us in the printing and publishing matters and to Mrs. May Li, Programme Assistant, COL for all the communications and networking with experts from different countries involved in the work. We express our thanks to Mr. Joshua David for the cover design, layout and language editing of all the documents of QATTEI.

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**GUIDELINES**

**Introduction**

The character of an institution can be seen in the extent to which its regular functioning reflects concern for quality. Every academic institution evolves its own functional modalities in its efforts towards actualizing its goals. These modalities represent institutional characteristics making it a distinct environment. An academic institution always is functionally autonomous but has working linkages with a broader framework of a macro context. An institution providing professional education programmes has these features more pronounced as it draws its resource inputs and clientele from the macro set up as well as giving the product benefit to the same. This puts the quality aspect of a professional education institution under spotlight. A teacher education institution (TEI) is no exception. Further it has to be recognized that the quality of a TEI is not merely determined by the product performance in the field but also has to be seen in respect of its functional elements in the overall context of the institutional vision.

**Quality Assurance in Teacher Education**

The goals of a TEI are varied and multi leveled. It has the specific purpose of preparing teachers who are effective in a culture context. As a TEI operates within a larger framework comprising several agencies such as the university system, the government set up for operating the school system - this is named differently across countries, such as department of school education, department of public instruction, directorate of school education, and so on. In addition, the national context streamlines societal

expectations, which a TEI has to cater to. If the TEI is an independent college run by a specific agency, it adds the agency's vision of a TEI as also its own goals. That is, the agency may have a set purpose of its own and consider operating a TEI to be contributing to its goals. TEIs run by several denominational agencies such as religious groups, community organisations, NGOs, minority groups, etc., are some examples of such institutions. In brief, though all TEIs work towards preparation of teachers each of them has a unique rendition of the goals.

At the functional level, the effectiveness of a TEI is reflected in the extent to which all these layers of goals mutually concur, though a total concurrence is a mere logical possibility. It is this that necessitates the concern for quality as a live feature in an institution. In other words, a TEI has to continuously ensure its effectiveness through generating such processes as would provide for relevant continuance and modifications in its functioning. Such a process is an integral part of the overall functioning of the TEI. Each institution needs to evolve its own internal processes to continuously ensure such quality concern in its functioning and adopt ramifications or even corrections, when needed. This process is what can be called "quality assurance". Thus, quality assurance is a continuous process, not a one-time event or an event at specified intervals. The process has to be a part of the institution's continuous concern for maintaining quality and wherever possible, enhance it. This requires self-assurance of quality in the institution so that it can ascertain quality concerns in all its functional aspects.

It is pertinent to recognize that each TEI has a unique 'ethos' which is the result of the commonly shared perceptions of the members, that evolve over time due to the way they function. The institution develops its own ways of mobilizing possible resources, ways and means to utilize the resources so as to meet its objectives and the larger field requirements. This makes each institution distinct despite the fact that it shares a similar curricular framework. To put it differently, the broad, regulatory details are common for all TEIs within a macro



banner of a university, but there is a distinct tone to the actual operational definitions of the substantive inputs provided therein. For example, every TEI provides a variety of learning inputs for enabling student teachers to gain not only conceptual understanding about instructional process but also actual field level practice. The actual emphasis provided in respect of conceptual rigour, the nature and number of activities carried out for that, the clarity and interfacing revealed in the learning activities, as well as the role delineations of teacher educators and student teachers, would be distinct in each TEI. They spread across a continuum of teacher designed and propelled emphasis to learner evolved learner centric emphasis. Very few TE programmes fall at either of the two ends of this continuum. Generally, every TEI can be positioned at some appropriate place along the continuum on the basis of the overall emphasis that is contained therein. It is also possible that the various components of the programme measure up to different sections on it. As these are perceived relevant by the staff, a general acceptance obtains in the institution. However, the extent to which each activity and/or component contributes to the overall quality of institution's functioning needs to be ascertained continuously. As the activities are designed by the staff, it is possible that the effectiveness of each activity and aspect is perceived relevant by the institution and presumed to be a quality indicator, and at times it is possible to be otherwise also. Usually, completion of an activity is perceived as indicative of its effectiveness. Some TEIs are quite critical in such estimates, some overrate their relevance and effectiveness, some are mechanical and complacent about their impact, and some possibly unclear about their impact potential. Such emerging perceptions of one's functioning within an institution contribute to its 'ethos'. Some TEIs carry out several effective practices, some have evolved a work friendly ambience in the institution, some have tried innovative practices, and some have adopted several activities, which provide support to the actual teacher preparation inputs of the programmes. This is but some examples of good efforts. However, these institutions may not be clear about the actual impact of these in-house practices on the overall quality of the TEI. The external assessment and accreditation process currently adopted provides an opportunity for the TEIs to recognize the value additions of their own practices. Conversely, it also helps TEIs recognize the limitations of a seemingly good

practice in terms of quality additions. It is significant to recognize that many of the good practices evolved by different TEIs are the result of some perceived need and may not necessarily be the result of systematic pre-planning. In view of such possibilities, TEIs could do better with a clear understanding of the technical and professional relevance of the required quality indicators, which reflect or represent quality concerns within the institution.

While institutional variations are an encouraging sign, ensuring a common or minimal level of quality in every TEI is essential. It is a pertinent need to have a frame of reference against which each TEI can compare its functioning in ascertaining the quality reflection. It is a valid concern to ensure that all TEIs maintain certain level of quality in their functioning, and enhance it, if possible. At present, the most common mode of quality appraisal is a two tier one. First, self-appraisal by the TEI (differently named across countries) resulting in an introspective report of the institution. Second, onsite visit by a team of experts, to ascertain the built in processes of the TEI using the self-appraisal report or the portfolio (whichever way it is called as) and through interactions with various stakeholders of the institution. The outcome of the whole exercise results in grading or rating the institutional performance. Such a procedure of quality assurance is becoming widely accepted. Alongside, it is also being increasingly recognized that an external appraisal can at best be periodical and cannot eliminate a certain extent of ‘made up’ element, for the sake of external accreditation. Nor does it ensure a continued concern for quality assurance as an integral aspect of everything the institution does. While external accreditation is relevant and even necessary, it will not suffice. Also essential would be to generate processes within the TEIs that will continuously have regard for the quality aspect in everything that the TEI pursues. This requires an understanding of the quality assurance processes, on the part of the TEI members, evolving appropriate tools for assessment and appraisal at regular intervals.

## What is Quality Assurance?

The quality assurance process pertains to the discernment of the variations in the different functional aspects of the institution created by implementation/adoption of any well thought out action or practice. The purpose of quality assurance is *capacity building* within an institution for pursuing quality improvement leading to stakeholder satisfaction. It is a continuous and conscious process aiming at excellence. It can be ensured through quality assessment that the institution is doing what it claims to have been doing. It is pertinent that an institution evolves internal processes for self-analysis and assessment enabling self-monitoring for quality improvement. Such processes keep the institution alert to the emerging individual and collective needs and demands among its members. It also provides incentives for trying out new things. These involve collective thinking and shared action. All these bring in a positive ethos characterized by academic concern, technical rigour, professional development and critical appraisal of aspects, all of which reflect as the concern for quality in the institution. In brief, they help develop a quality culture in the institution.

## The “How” of Quality Assurance

Quality assessment process is based on two overriding concepts

- (i) Institution wide thinking and
- (ii) involvement of all the staff (teaching and administrative) in both assessment and improvement.

Doing it requires a readiness and certain dedicated preparation on their part. It has to be a collective effort. Clarity about what is being assessed has to be commonly accepted by all members. While actually assessing any or all aspects of functioning, care has to be taken to ascertain certain things.

- ◆ *Members should look beyond ‘self’* - The practice or aspect being assessed naturally being carried out by the staff themselves, makes them personalize the practice. Such an ‘I did’ feeling could color their scrutiny.

- ◆ *Training* - Staff members require training to subject their own working in objective and critical scrutiny.
- ◆ *Maintain rigour in assessment* - This needs a careful and penetrating examination of the data - both experiential and documented, without entertaining prejudices.
- ◆ *Unbiased Judgement* - The aspect being assessed may involve one or a few staff members whereas assessment process normally involves others who are not directly associated with the practice. Thus, prejudices may surface in two ways - One, those involved in the implementation of the practice being assessed may be subjective and have an emotional involvement. They may tend to rate everything positively without critical scrutiny. Two, others who are external to the implementation may tend to over emphasize on the limitations and become over critical. The purpose of assessment is *not* to relatively rate the performance of the staff or to find fault with their functioning but to discern the extent of quality concern reflected in the practice.
- ◆ *Relevance* - Personal satisfaction should be just one indicator but the purpose and relevance of the practice in the overall programme has to be the central focus.
- ◆ *Objective* - The outcome of assessment should be recorded in a clear, objective way bringing out the positive features of the aspect under scrutiny, relevance of its continuance or not, the negative repercussions it has on the other aspects of the TEI's functioning, etc. This will help the institutions in making further decisions for quality enhancement.

The above issues point to the fact that the TEI has to be conscious of the quality assurance needs. This will help in regularly monitoring and documenting all happenings during implementation of a pre-designed aspect in a truthful manner, which in turn could be used for bringing in the desired improvements. A wide range of records can be generated during the process with very little effort. These could be factual as well as experiential recordings from not only the teachers but also the

students, administrative staff and, wherever possible, parents and the other agencies involved such as the practicing schools. Initially a TEI would perhaps find this an added effort. This would, however, become a regular feature leading to evolving better and more efficient ways of recording. Finally, quality assurance as an embedded institutional activity will result in stakeholder satisfaction and institutional excellence.

### **External Agency for Quality Assurance**

Concern for quality within institutions is not a new concept, but ascertaining it in all institutions in a more explicit manner has become a fast spreading concern across the globe. The term quality assurance usually gets associated with an external accreditation agency for identifying the level of quality of an institution, like the NAAC in India, HEQC in South Africa, LAN in Malaysia, AUQA in Australia, TTA in UK and so on. Within the educational structure in any country, teacher education has emerged as a large, diversified network of institutions. This network includes both ‘general’ and special TEIs engaged in providing pre-service and in-service programmes. In fact, each of these is varied. For example, among the pre-service TEIs preparing new entrants for teaching, there is diversification in respect of the school level for which teachers are prepared, such as, elementary, secondary and senior secondary. Besides, there are TEIs for specific areas such as physical education, inclusive education, language education, art education, special education and so on. In addition, there are specialized institutions with focus on either in-service and pre-service TE or both, while several agencies are engaged in enhancing professional development of teachers for varied aspects of school education. In such a large system of teacher education, which is also quite diversified in respect of several variables, it becomes essential to ensure a certain common level of quality within teacher education institutions (TEI). In this, external quality assurance is helpful. Across the countries such external QA is carried out through a combination of one or more of the following processes :

- ◆ Self-evaluation by the institution
- ◆ Peer review by a panel of external experts on the basis of one or more site visits

- ◆ Use of performance indicators or benchmarking
- ◆ Product assessment – actual student performance

However, such externally induced process of quality assessment and accreditation can also become additional support to facilitate continuous assessment of internal processes by the institution.

### **The Quality Assurance Toolkit**

It would be of great support to the TEIs if they have some way of discerning the underlying quality aspects. It would go a long way towards developing a ‘*culture of quality sensitivity*’ in TEIs. Towards such a need this ‘*Quality Assurance Toolkit for Teacher Education Institutions (QATTEI)*’ has been prepared as a support to TEIs for continuous internal quality assessment and appraisal. It comprises three documents, which will facilitate the smooth progression of Quality Assurance:

**Document 1** : A conceptual introductory booklet on ‘*Quality Assurance in Higher Education – An Introduction*’.

**Document 2** : “*Quality Indicators for Teacher Education*”, a booklet on identifying and using various quality indicators (QIs) for self assessment by the institutions.

**Document 3** : “*An Anthology of Best Practices in Teacher Education*”, which is a collection of ‘Best Practices’ from TEIs across the Commonwealth. These case studies reflect how the QIs and the ‘Best Practices’ are mutually related and can be applied in identifying the ‘Best Practices’.

**Document 1** - ‘*Quality Assurance in Higher Education – An Introduction*’ is a conceptual rendition of the concept of Quality Assurance and its dimensions. It has been brought out by NAAC, India in collaboration with COL, Canada to provide an understanding of:

- ◆ The role of Higher Education in society
- ◆ Meaning of ‘quality’ and quality in higher education

- ◆ The process of quality assurance and the various internationally used models of quality assurance
- ◆ A brief history of quality assurance in education

The book prepared as an instructional module is complete with adequate elaboration, examples, illustrations and assignments. These will be found useful by any reader particularly one new to the concept of quality assurance and related issues. As the module has a focus on higher education in general, explanations and activities with specific reference to TEIs are not given. However, the module provides a meaningful backdrop for understanding quality assurance in education, which can be applicable to any HEI and thus to TEIs also. List of references given at the end provides further direction to anyone interested in greater details. This book has been included in the Toolkit with the explicit intention of placing quality assurance and related concepts in context and to introduce the concept to the beginners.

**Document 2** – “*Quality Indicators for Teacher Education*” has been the result of a persistent collaborative effort by NAAC, India and COL, Canada, with a direct focus on TEIs in all Commonwealth countries. It is an outcome of efforts to collate understanding gained in respect of quality assurance in TE across Commonwealth countries. Several interactive fora were organized under the joint aegis of NAAC, India and COL, Canada where experts from several Commonwealth countries shared distinct practices attempted in respective countries highlighting the wide range of innovations evolved to meet the felt needs in particular TEIs. Such international sharing led to concretizing the possibility of developing a comprehensive framework, which can help TEIs in self-appraisal for quality assurance. Another fall out of these fora was the extensive exposure to the many field relevant innovations that contributed to the quality enhancement of particular TEIs, of course, within specific country contexts. Continued deliberations among select group of experts led to streamlining the various observable features of functioning in a TEI, which feed into its quality systems.

The main emphasis of the attempt has been to arrive at a framework encompassing all aspects of TEI's functioning comprehensively, which would help TEIs carry out systematic observation and recording of their own functioning as a basis for ascertaining and assuring their quality provisions. In other words, attempt was made to identify crucial '*Quality Indicators*' (*QIs*) in the various aspects of an institution's functioning that would contribute to sustenance as well as enhancement of its quality. In this sense, the identified *QIs* not only enable an understanding of the needed qualities in an institution that contribute to its quality but also can be used as a tool that helps an institution in assessing its standing against quality concerns reflected in its functioning.

The framework detailed in *Document 2* comprises six priority areas, which are central in an institution's functioning, denoted as '*Key Areas*'. Within each identified '*Key Area*' (*KA*), specific functional aspects have been detailed as '*Quality Aspects*' (*QA*). These *QAs* represent and cover almost all broad aspects of the functioning of a TEI cutting across geographic locations. For example, process of curriculum design, feedback mechanism, transaction of theory and so on. So far 25 such *QAs* have been identified. Each of the *QA* is further delineated in terms of operations or actual tasks carried out which in real terms represent the quality of a TEI's functioning. These operational features within each *QA* are called *Quality Indicators* (*QIs*) and 75 of them have been listed in the document. A table reflecting the 6 *Key Areas*, 25 *Quality Aspects* spread across them and the 75 *Quality Indicators* under various *QAs* has been given as section II in the document. For facilitating the understanding on the application and use of the *QIs* each of them has been provided with an *Operational definition*, *Importance* and *Source* where to look for evidences.

*Document 2* has the feature of a self-contained monograph. It presents the way in which the whole exercise can be carried out, gives complete list of *QIs* as stated above, and also provides a scale which an institution can use for assessing one's own performance. While every *QI* is operationally defined; it is possible that in specific institutional contexts, one



may feel the need to alter it slightly, within the same QA. While attempting to apply QIs the TEI has to examine the extent to which each QI is appropriate in one's institutional context, and if needed, contextualize the operational definitions appropriately. Recognising the 'diverse programme specifications and diffusion of the trained teachers across larger geographic areas', the Document suggests the use of QIs at the institutional level depending on the need for appraisal in particular aspects. Gradually, the TEI can include core aspects and report appraisal more comprehensively, useful for both internal and external stakeholders. It is explicitly stated that the list of QIs presented in Document 2 'represents a good selection, based on good practices and concentrates largely on the processes rather than on inputs and outcomes'. It should be borne in mind that the listed QIs, though covers most of the aspects of a TEI's functioning, it is possible, and also necessary to revise these over time according to the changing conditions and developments, add newer QIs as and when identified and make it increasingly comprehensive and reflective of changing field situations. However, it is a good tool in the hands of a TEI for self-appraisal in respect of quality of its performance. The QIs it is expected will be '*a beginning to bring in uniformity of the provision and positioning of teacher educators and institutional agendas in such a way that they address more directly the quality provision and the expressed needs of teachers and the conditions they work in*'. The document also gives an approach to measure the quality of the institutional practices using the QIs and formats for documenting and recording the outcome.

*Document 3 "An Anthology of Best Practices in TEIs"* presents some significant and interesting case studies of practices that various TEIs adopted on the basis of perceived need and found them to be contributing to the overall quality concern of the institution. It is significant to note that these case studies have been carried out across eleven Commonwealth countries. There are 20 case studies in this document and as is evident, it is only an initial listing of best practices. There must be many more such relevant practices evolved in other institutions, which can be added to the anthology. In this sense, *Document 3* is expected to expand continuously. These are included in this '*Toolkit*'

in order to showcase the way internal processes contribute to the enhancement of quality in an institution. The reader will find it interesting to note how specific needs for carrying out teacher education programme (TEP) effectively led to alterations in the overall functioning of the Programme and even to systemic changes. Going through these case studies one recognizes the fact that any institution feels the need to try something ‘different’ in some particular aspect of its functioning. This need provides a reason for attempting it as a process or a way to do it, which leads to some outcome. Having executed such a ‘*different practice*’ the institution finds that the new effort led to some perceivable quality improvement in the aspect of functioning that was addressed, and helped influence the other aspects of institutional functioning. As the TEI that tried the new practice perceived an improvement as an outcome, it could be one ‘*best practice*’ for that institution. That is, any other TEI may find the practice as a ‘*routine act*’ or not feasible for its context which means there can be no practice that can be suggested as ‘*the best*’ uniformly for all TEIs. Within each TEI, under particular set of conditions that results in a best practice can be any practice that evolved as a ‘*solution to a problem faced*’ or a ‘*trouble-shooter*’ exercise or ‘*an exploration as a better way of doing the same thing*’ which contributed to quality improvement. By going through the reported case studies on the “*best practices*” in *Document 3* one would find the case studies

- ◆ Lend support to one’s own practices and thereby give assurance;
- ◆ Help gain an insight into the way other TEIs function;
- ◆ Provide insights to find better solutions to a similar problem they face;
- ◆ Give a better direction for further improving one’s own practice; and,
- ◆ Enhance a field based awareness of the developments elsewhere.

Attempt has been made to bring in a structure for all the case studies in order to render them into a pattern, facilitate the reader to relate the practice suitably to his/her institutional context and create awareness on the various approaches adopted in executing a process.

To facilitate interaction among interested TEIs the structure followed for reporting the ‘*Best Practice*’ and a complete list of contributors with their postal and e-mail addresses are provided as Annexures in *Document 3*.

It is pertinent to state that the best practices reported in *Document 3* were not either visualized or executed in QI specific manner. However, each of the cases points out the places or aspects of the practice in which specific QIs can be applied. That is, through a ‘*best practice*’ the main concern of the TEI is to attempt an improvement in one or more aspects of its functioning. In doing so, the institution is addressing one or more quality indicators across QAs. The QIs covered at different stages of each ‘*best practice*’ reported have been given in ‘*text boxes*’ at appropriate places in the case studies. This is to help readers see the way QIs can be used for evaluating and identifying the ‘*best practices*’ and the way they are linked and mutually interact. Institutional quality does not surface through one activity but in the way in which that activity is positioned within the total programme implementation, the repercussions it has for other activities and the preparedness to make necessary adjustments to face them. When TEIs become increasingly aware of the identifiable quality features within themselves in every KA, it becomes easier and much more effective and efficient in visualizing the required changes for quality enhancement. It is hoped that such clarity and exposition of quality concerns become inherent in the institution’s processes.

The entire package is titled as ‘*Quality Assurance Toolkit for Teacher Education Institutions (QATTEI)*’ with a specific reason. All the three documents can be used by any TEI as a “*Quality Assurance Capacity Building Tool*”, for ascertaining the degree to which its internal processes reflect quality concerns, discern the strengths as well as areas that need and can be improved upon and for continuously assessing one’s ways of operating in qualitative terms. It is pertinent to mention that the *Toolkit* is just the beginning of efforts towards streamlining quality concerns in TEIs. It is hoped that with the adoption of these by various TEIs, it would lead to identification of more QIs, more discerning

definition of some of the identified QIs and an effective feedback about the comprehensiveness and feasibility of these in addressing quality concerns in teacher education.

### **How to use the Toolkit**

This '*Toolkit*' is a useful instrument in the hands of anyone who wishes to adopt quality assurance as a regular, internal process in an institution. A suggestive way is described below which gives an idea in undertaking the process of self-assessment using the "*Quality Assurance Toolkit for Teacher Education Institutions (QATTEI)*".

#### ***Try the following....***

- ◆ Read through all the three documents contained in the *Toolkit*.
- ◆ *Document 2* is the actual instrument for internal assessment. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the QIs in the proper perspective of the KAs and quality aspects, so that one can recognize the extent of quality reflection in respect of the QI.
- ◆ Decide whether the internal assessment is intended for the functioning of the institution as a whole or any specific aspect or practice/s therein. If the focus is on the entire institution then all KAs have to be assessed in terms of the 75 QIs. It is also possible that at a given time a TEI is trying out a new practice and wishes to know its repercussions on the institution's quality status. In such a situation, the TEI can identify the KA under which the practice falls, and appraise only the QIs under appropriate quality aspect/s.
- ◆ Each QI has to be seen as a continuum of 'least' to 'most' on a five point scale. Logically, an institution can be placed on either end of the continuum. That is, with reference to the QI the institution can be rated 'least' (1) or 'most' (5), though it is in reality, less probable. Any TEI, which is functional, is performing at some level, which has to be 'better' than the 'least' in respect of quality; a weak institution may find itself nearer to the lowest end, which is indicative of the needed strengthening

of the QI. Similarly, on the positive side, there is always a ‘better’ way of doing things and so, no institution is really at the ‘most’ level; it could be nearer to it. Thus, while appraising the QI care has to be taken to rate rationally and locate performance on the QI at appropriate place on the continuum.

- ◆ A few criteria come in handy while locating one’s place on the continuum for each QI. They are: adequacy, relevance, feasibility of implementation, extent of effectiveness, all these have to be seen vis-à-vis the expectations of quality.
- ◆ A rating scale is provided for this purpose and details of how to consolidate the ratings on several QIs is given in *Document 2*.
- ◆ One pertinent point has to be kept in mind. While rating scale proves to be a clear and easy instrument for assessment, it has an inherent restriction in respect of the real ‘distance’ one travels in terms of quality improvement. That is, having gained a certain position on the scale of five points puts a limit on the remaining possibility of improvement. For example, an institution obtaining ‘4’ on the scale has only one point to cover where as an institution obtaining ‘3’ has more limits to achieve. The earlier institution may become reticent about further quality improvement while the latter may seek further improvements. In this sense, the scale restricts the quality limits.
- ◆ The rating obtained by an institution at the first assessment is relatively simpler. However, subsequent assessments require greater discerning and sensitive rating. For instance, if the placement won by the institution is nearer the ‘*most*’ or ‘*best*’ in the first assessment, it leaves lesser scope for the institution to proceed ahead. Thus, it is required that the institution begins where it has been placed during assessment and evolve the rating scale accordingly.

### **End word**

This Toolkit is presented to those concerned with TE directly and indirectly with the purpose of enhancing efforts towards evolving and sustaining quality oriented ethos in TEIs. It is

hoped that TEIs in varying geographic and institutional contexts will use it and provide feedback of its feasibility and impact potential. The users may also contribute in extending the best practices benchmarks and the discernment of further quality indicators. The Toolkit is explicit in terms of both internal and external quality assurance mechanisms. The implicit purpose of developing this Toolkit is to encourage, and possibly establish, a culture of quality concern in every TEI. While the Toolkit helps in assuring and ensuring one's own quality standing at a given point in time without external pressure or regulations, it would, it is hoped, also lead to internalizing quality concerns and build an ethos for quality in each individual in a TEI. It is explicit that it provides ready inputs to external quality assurance agencies and other stakeholders in the level of quality and institutional futuristic directions to quality improvements in teacher education.

The sponsoring agencies, viz., NAAC, India and COL, Canada, are pleased to present this “*Quality Assurance Toolkit for Teacher Education Institutions (QATTEI)*” to all TEIs and invite observations and suggestions from the field functionaries and partners in the endeavor of quality teacher education.

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